

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
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FM AMCONSUL QUEBEC
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1360
INFO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA PRIORITY
AMCONSUL MONTREAL PRIORITY

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE QUEBEC 0193

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ECON, CA
SUBJECT: PARIZEAU TO MAKE YET ANOTHER COUNTEROFFIER ON SALES
TAX ISSUE

REF: QUEBEC 0192

1. FINANCE MINISTER JACQUES PARIZEAU ANNOUNCED OVER THE
WEEKEND THAT HE WAS PUTTING TOGETHER A NEW COMPROMISE
PROPOSAL ON THE SALES TAX ISSUE. PARIZEAU SAID THAT
THERE WAS STILL ROOM FOR COMPROMISE AND HOPES AND
AGREEMENT CAN BE REACHED SINCE "THE WHOLE BUSINESS HAS LASTED
LONG ENOUGH AND SHOULD BE FINISHED WITH." HE ADDED THAT HE
WOULD SUBMIT HIS NEW PROPOSAL TO OTTAWA SHORTLY.

2. IN THE MEANTIME, LIBERAL LEADER CLAUDE RYAN TOOK
PAINS TO KEEP HIS DISTANCE FROM THE LATEST PROPOSALS BY
FINANCE MINISTER JEAN CHRETIEN (REFTEL) WHICH WERE BEING
LABELLED THE "RYAN OPTION." RYAN TOLD A NEWS CONFERENCE
THAT A SOLUTION WOULD HAVE TO BE REACHED WHICH WOULD NOT
PENALIZE THE QUEBEC TAXPAYER THE WAY CHRETIEN'S PROPOSALS DID.
WHILE THE LIBERAL PARTY WOULD CONTINUE TO BACK THE PQ
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POSITION, RYAN ASSERTED THAT PARIZEAU HAD BEEN TOO QUICK
TO REJECT CHRETIEN'S LATEST PROPOSALS. HE SAID THAT CHRETIEN'S
OFFER COULD CONSTITUTE THE BASIS FOR A COMPROMISE AND THAT
PARIZEAU'S OVER HASTY REFUSAL INDICATED THAT PARIZEAU WAS PLAYING
POLITICS RATHER THAN KEEPING THE TRUE INTERESTS OF
QUEBECERS IN MIND.

3. COMMENT: SEVERAL ANALYSTS HAVE POINTED OUT THAT, IN FACT, THE "RYAN PROPOSALS" AND THE "CHRETIEN PROPOSALS" ARE ALMOST IDENTICAL. RYAN IS AWARE, HOWEVER, OF THE POPULARITY OF PARIZEAU'S POSITION AND IS WARY ABOUT GETTING HIS PARTY IDENTIFIED WITH THE CHRETIEN VIEW. BY ATTACKING PARIZEAU FOR "PLAYING POLITICS" RYAN MAY BE LAYING THE GROUND-WORK FOR ENDING THE OPPOSITION'S UNANIMOUS APPROVAL OF THE PQ POSITION. ALSO, HE IS NO DOUBT HOPING TO FIND SOME WAY OF ENDING THE POLITICAL FIELD DAY THE PQ IS ENJOYING AT THE EXPENSE OF MR CHRETIEN. MCNAMARA

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NNN

*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a

*** Current Classification *** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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